The listing of claims presented below replaces all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

Listing of claims:

1. (Currently amended) A process for the preparation of expanded millet or sorghum , the process comprising;

a. equilibrating millet or sorghum grains to ~~optimum~~ a moisture content of 15 - 35% by adding additional water and tempering or resting in order to impart pseudo-elastic texture to decorticated millet or sorghum endosperm,

b. loosening intracellular intactness of the endosperm by mechanical means without developing fissures to obtain bumped millet or sorghum,

c. drying the bumped millet or sorghum to a moisture level of 10 - 20% ~~optimum level for puffing~~,

d. grading the millet or sorghum obtained in step (c) to obtain millet grains with a thickness of 0.8 - 1.0mm and diameter 1.5 - 1.6 mm ~~near uniform size~~ by screening through appropriate sieves or screens,

e. subjecting the grains to high temperature short time treatment at 200 -250°C for 15 - 45 seconds in salt, sand or air or such other heat transfer media to prepare expanded millet or sorghum .

2. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein step (a) above is carried out on hydrothermally treated and decorticated finger millet.

3. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the decorticated millet is equilibrated to 15- 35% moisture level and subjected to bumping or flattening to 0.7-1. 0 mm thickness and 1. 5-1. 6 mm diameter, mechanically or manually, without causing visible cracks.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Canceled)

6. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the expanded millet prepared is pre-cooked to provide 95-100% carbohydrate digestibility.

7. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the millet is selected from the group consisting of finger millet, pearl millet, sorghum and minor millets containing fully or partially gelatinized starch.

8. (Currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the bumped grains are subjected to high temperature short time treatment in sand or salt, ~~heated to 200-250 C for 30-40 sec~~ and the sand or salt sieved off immediately, ~~or air heated to 180-200 C or in a gun popper or fluidized bed dryer, microwave and infra red heaters~~.

9. (Withdrawn) Expanded millet when prepared by the process of claim 1 for use as a ready-to-eat snack, supplementary food, alone or in combination with other edible cereals, pulses, oil seeds, fruits and vegetables, and as an ingredient in confectionery.

10. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the expanded millet is freed from adhering heat transfer media by brushing or aspiration.

11. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the expanded millet obtained is free from seed born microflora.

12. (Currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the expansion ratio of the puffed grains is in the range from 5 to 8 times of its original volume and is effected without loss of it's the grain's original spherical shape and with ~~smooth glossy surface~~, a crispy ~~and spongy~~ texture.

13. (Currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the expanded millet contains 4-8% protein, 1-1. 5% fat, 13-16% dietary fiber with 98% carbohydrate digestibility.

14. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the expanded millet is coated with an edible[[,]] fruit or edible vegetable powder, ~~sweetening~~ or edible agent selected from the group consisting of sugar, malt powder, malt extract, and edible colors.